

REARGUARD BATTLE —THEN COLLAPSE

BY 'NOVA'

Bromley 3, Wycombe 1

DESPITE the absence of four of their most experienced players, on county duty, Wycombe Wanderers fought a courageous rearguard action at Bromley on Saturday.

For 83 minutes it seemed as if they would hold on for a draw, but in those last seven minutes the Kent side scored three times against the tiring Wycombe youngsters, to take both Isthmian League points.

Few of the meagre handful of spectators there would deny that Bromley always looked the likely winners. But this was because the absence of attackers like Hodges, Worley and the forward-minded Beck, made Wycombe rely almost entirely on defence.

And how well they did it, until just a few minutes from time. Then half-back Hobbis ran in and sliced a header wide of Patrick while the rest of the defence stood motionless. Two minutes later Patrick pushed a shot round the post with a brilliant leap but from the corner a McAllister shot slipped through his hands into the net.

COME-BACK

Wycombe made a spirited come-back and Bedford made his only worthwhile contribution by stabbing in a goal after John Thomas had headed across a free-kick from Pullin, but almost on time Nottage stormed through to hit home the best goal of the game.

This four-goal burst in the last stages of the game brightened up the proceedings and at least sent the home supporters away happy. But until then there had been little thoughtful attacking play. Bromley's attacks were quickly nipped in the bud by the fierce-tackling Charlie Gale and the tireless Dave Thomas. Alistair Lewis was unusually dominant at cen-

tre-half, while Pullin plugged the gaps as well as lending weight to the attacks.

As a last line of defence, the Wanderers had the agile Patrick in top form. But another kick in the face, left him looking like a boxer who had fought for the world title.

It was he who saved Wycombe on several occasions in the first half. After McAllister had crashed a header against the bar and then sent a shot inches over the top, the Wanderers goalkeeper brilliantly pushed a shot from him round the post and the next second fisted out a pile-driver from Nottage.

GRIP SLACKENS

In this middle period of the first half the Wanderers' defence was hard pressed but gradually Bromley's grip slackened. Helped by some atrocious passing from the home side, Wycombe came more into the picture and Horseman and Merrick, the two best forwards, both sent shots only inches too high. Bromley were quickly into their stride after the interval but after the facial injury to Patrick early on Wycombe were confined mainly to breakaways and from two of them Merrick and Horseman should have scored. But both shot wide when well placed. When Pullin kicked a shot off the line with only eight minutes to go it seemed as if the home side, despite all their territorial advantage, would never score. But just when their supporters were despairing came the header from Hobbis—and the start of the three-goal flood.

Bromley—J. Harwood; D. Brown, R. Poole; B. Hobbis, A. Basham, I. Luckhurst; D. Hall, A. Viney, D. McAllister, E. Nottage, J. Stevens.

Wycombe—P. Patrick; P. Sewell, G. Pullin; D. Thomas, A. Lewis, C. Gale; R. Bedford, D. Bassett, L. Merrick, T. Horseman, J. Thomas.